WI-FI INTERNET RADIO PRODUCTS–AN UPDATE

While the promise of wireless connectivity to the Internet for portable computer users has been by and large realized with the profusion of wi-fi "hot spots," the elusive stand-alone, wireless Internet radio has yet to become a reality for consumers. An Australian company, Torian (http://www.torian.com.au), hopes to change that later this year when they anticipate shipment of their InFusion portable Internet radio (see picture).

The InFusion, which finished in the top three products of the "Audio to go" category this past January at the 2005 International Consumer Electronics Show (CES), connects wirelessly to the Internet using Wi-Fi and provides the following features:

• **Internet radio:** listen to Internet radio broadcasts (subject to wireless hotspot availability);

• **Audio recording:** record directly from the Internet, or via a timer recording function, for playback later;

• **News/sport/weather ticker tape:** view textual information using a built-in "banner streaming" facility;

• **MP3 player:** play MP3 music–the InFusion device is equipped with an expandable memory slot which allows for transfer of MP3 files from other devices;

• **FM receiver:** listen to local FM radio stations using the built-in FM receiver;

• **Rechargeable batteries:** built-in, lightweight rechargeable batteries.

Torian's "iRoamer" technology is at the heart of the InFusion device, and according to Torian, iRoamer has been designed so that it can be embedded in other devices, including home theatre/stereo systems, portable radios, high-capacity MP3 Players, stereo amplifiers, car radios, mobile phones, televisions and DVD players. Torian expects the InFusion to retail for around $250 and currently is slating shipments for "mid-2005."

Other standalone wireless Internet radio products appear to be less far along than InFusion. Technology developed by Reciva (Cambridge, England, www.reciva.com) seems to have advanced since last reported on in *Radio TechCheck* (see the May 31, 2004 issue) but no consumer products have been announced. Reciva is marketing its "Barracuda Internet Radio Module" (See Picture) which is capable of playing both live and on-demand Internet radio streams in MP3, Windows Media Audio, and RealAudio formats. The Reciva Internet radio software application which runs on the Barracuda module supports three Internet streaming protocols—RTSP (Real Time Streaming Protocol), MMS (Microsoft Media Server protocol), and HTTP (Hyper Text Transfer Protocol).

Another standalone wireless Internet radio "wannabe," Penguin Radio (Chesapeake Beach, MD, www.penguinradio.com), which announced its plans to develop a standalone Internet radio as early as the

year 2000, currently supports an audio streaming web "portal" which is designed to also support access by mobile phones (currently under test) but has yet to successfully develop a consumer Internet Radio. A unique feature of their streaming service is their use of "WEI" numbers (stands for What-Everything-Internet), a way of cataloguing streaming radio stations that includes WHAT the station is, EVERYTHING about the station, and the INTERNET address of the station's streaming media feed. Penguin Radio does this because streaming media content providers change their URL addresses frequently, and it is impossible to maintain a listing of pure URLs without having a number of bad links; the WEI numbers mask the URL address from the user so that the Penguin Radio database managers can maintain the most current and active URL's "behind the scenes."

The NAB Radio Show
September 21–23, 2005 Philadelphia, PA
2-For-1 Registration for NAB Members
Both attendees must be registered at the same time in order to get the 2 for 1 NAB Member registration rate. You will also need the current NAB Members Only access code which is **202**. For additional information on The NAB Radio Show go to: http://www.nab.org/conventions/radioshow/2005/.